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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, known to us in countless ways and times without number, we turn to You that in Your light we might see light. As our lawmakers work, help them to see You in the common rounds and ordinary labors of their day. As they become aware of Your presence, may their lives experience the splendor and strength that You alone can give. Save them from pride and contention and lead them in Your way. Help them, Lord, to remember that You are still their refuge and strength and a very present help in the time of trouble. Send them forth to face this day armed with a faith that will not shrink though pressed by many a foe.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business for up to an hour. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act. We will immediately proceed to a series of votes in relation to the remaining amendments. Currently we have nine amendments pending. We hope not all of the amendments will require a rollcall vote.

In addition, there may be a break in the voting sequence because Chairman BAUCUS, Senator GRASSLEY, and others have been invited to the White House. We may begin opening statements on the procurement bill during that time, while the White House meeting is taking place.

All votes following the first vote will be 10 minutes in duration. Senators are encouraged to remain near the Chamber during the series of votes.

Upon disposition of this legislation, the Senate will begin the consideration of S. 454, a bill to improve the organi-

zation and procedures of the Department of Defense for the acquisition of major weapons systems.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

GUANTANAMO PLAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it should be clear to everyone at this point that the administration got ahead of itself by announcing an arbitrary closing date for Guantanamo before it even drew up a list of safe alternatives. So I rise this morning to express my continuing concerns about the administration's apparent lack of a plan for detainees at this facility and to press the administration for answers on a number of important questions.

Over the past 2 weeks, I and others have asked the Attorney General to provide the American people with the assurance that closing Guantanamo will keep the American people as safe as Guantanamo has. We have asked a series of questions. So far these questions have gone unanswered. But the questions remain.

Which detainees will be released or transferred overseas?

How do we know these men will not return to the battlefield?

Will they be tried in American courts or will we use military commissions?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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